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POLITENESS.

It is rather a favourable sign of character when we are willing to take on trust the experience of those who have gone before us; yet probably there have been many popular opinions in the world, taking even the stamp of proverbs, which, like spurious coin, long passed current till the hour of detection arrived. First, they were suspected, and then rigidly examined, and proved to be worthless. Surely the notion that habitual politeness is more or less allied to insincerity of character is one of these fallacies. Those rough-natured people who insist on saying unpleasant things solely because they are true, generally depreciate urbanity of manner and habits of courtesy. In season and out of season they clamour about 'deeds, not words,' as if good deeds and kind words were not in reality closely allied. We have said, in season and out of season, the phrase being an idiomatic expression for frequent occurrence; but probably the occasions are very rare when it is necessary to divorce kind words from kind deeds.

A good action, if performed in a kindly and gracious manner, is doubly valued; and in default of the power to render a service, words of sympathy are very sweet to one in trouble. Shakespeare, whose word we may take, says, 'Assume a virtue if you have it not;' and when lovers of harsh frankness scoff at the adage, they fail to fathom the depths of its moral teaching.

If the darts of a hasty, and, therefore, probably an unfair judgment, and the fire of a quick temper, are constantly crushed down by habitual urbanity of manner, they lose a great deal of their harshness; for a moment's reflection may soften the judgment and cool the temper. At any rate they have not raised that spirit of antagonism which only produces evil.

It has been truly said that 'politeness is the oil which allows the wheels of society to turn easily,' and it is an aphorism worth bearing in

mind. It may safely be said that the habit of politeness is a very subtle and fine thing; and for it to last and wear well, and be as productive of happiness as it is capable of being, it must never be laid aside, even in the most intimate relations of life; nay, it is in them that it is most valuable. Children who in their nursery have been taught politeness—which is the outward sign of consideration for the feelings of others—have through life an advantage over their less fortunate contemporaries. They are liked by their elders—perhaps without much reasoning why—at the age when the good feeling of elders is most precious; and if they rise in the world, they bear about them that stamp of 'good breeding' which fits them for an exalted station. Brothers do not always respect their sisters in the same sort of way as the true gentleman respects all womanhood; and girls may be rude too, though this is generally from the want of a better example. Manners are very contagious, and possibly the feminine nature is a trifle more imitative than that of man. A flat contradiction, in which unmannerly people are rather apt to indulge, often provokes some equally harsh retort, while a real difference of opinion may be expressed in courteous language and gentle tones.

Perhaps, however, it is in the closest relation of social life that the habit of politeness is most essential. The more truly womanly a woman is, the more quick she is to detect the careless negligence which sometimes replaces the assiduity of other days, or the rough instead of the tender manner of fault-correcting. We should all beware of letting our politeness be only a varnish of manner easily rubbed off, instead of something ingrained by early training and habitual practice. The want of habitual courtesy in domestic life has too often occasioned that 'rift in the lute' which prevents complete harmony. When women fail in politeness, and show a coarse nature beneath the 'varnish,' they place themselves at even a greater dis-

advantage than men do, for they break the spell of their influence, which is sometimes as potent as visible control.

Undoubtedly, there are people so happily constituted that courtesy of manner seems natural to them: the present writer has met with it in people of very humble station, who somehow elevated menial employment by the manner in which it was performed. After all, politeness of manners is only carrying out the Divine precept of doing as we would be done by, for we all like civility from others, whatever our own shortcomings in that particular may be. There is a daring expression in one of the old Elizabethan dramas which it might be deemed profane to repeat here, but which some readers may recall to mind, as to Who was the first gentleman that walked the earth; but undoubtedly the self-sacrifice which habitual 'politeness' may sometimes entail, the generous thought of others before ourselves—altruism, according to modern phraseology, and readiness to protect the weak and aid the struggling, are Divine attributes which go far to mould the heroic character.

Of course, changes of manners are among the social changes which are always at work; and it would not be possible, even if it were desirable, to return altogether to the stately manners of a past generation.

'Mamma, dear,' is a more loving phrase to a mother's ear than 'Honoured Madam,' though it would have astonished our great-grandmothers; and the spontaneous caresses of a child are very sweet. Yet it is possible so to err on the side of familiarity both with the young and with subordinates, that the sense of reverence for elders and superiors is undermined. But human nature is slow to adopt the happy medium in any of its ways, and elderly people declare that manners are daily deteriorating. Only the very old can fully realise the order of things which prevailed up to the early years of the present century; but it has left a leaven behind it which we recognise among the thoroughly well-bred members of society.

It would not suit our railway, steamship, telegraphic days to return to the stately bearing of our forefathers; but we may look back with something like artistic interest and admiration on the days when

Fine manners were among the well-born class
 Implanted at such early date, they grew
 To be but second nature; never seemed
 The gilded fetters, awkward in their fit,
 But rather polished staves to lean upon,
 Suggesting rest and ease in daily life,
 Suppression of harsh tempers and rude speech.
 Our stately grandams with their curtsies low,
 Who practised deference with a gentle grace,
 That had no servile touch of cringing mien,
 Would be amazed at half our modern ways,
 Curt speeches, with a something from the lips
 That hits the ear like pebbles lightly flung,

And is the stony, mindless flow of slang
 Which springs from idleness, that will not delve
 For fitting phrase in that rich mine of words
 Which yields its wealth to them who clearly
 think.

THE CHRONICLES OF COUNT ANTONIO.*

CHAPTER IV. (continued).

THEN the Duke set Antonio again on his horse, and the three rode together towards Firmola, and as they went, again and again the Duke tested the operation of the drug, setting Antonio many strange, ludicrous, and unseemly things to do and to say; and Antonio did and said them all. And he wondered greatly that the drug had no power over him, and that his brain was clear and his senses all his own, nor did he then believe that the Duke had, in truth, slain the wizard for any reason save that the wizard had harboured him, an outlaw, and suffered him to hear the Duke's counsels: and he was grieved at the wizard's death.

Thus they rode through the night; and it was the hour of dawn when they came to the gates of Firmola. Now Antonio was puzzled what he should do; for having been in a swoon, he knew not whether the Duke had more of the potion; nor could he tell with certainty whether the potion would be powerless against the senses of a weak girl as it had proved against his own. Therefore he said to the Duke, 'I pray you, my lord, give me more of that sweet drink. For it has refreshed me and set my mind at rest from all trouble.'

'Nay, Antonio, you have had enough,' said the Duke, bantering him. 'I have another use for the rest.' And they were now nearing the gates of Firmola. Then Antonio began to moan pitifully, saying, 'These bonds hurt my hands;' and he whined and did as a child would do, feigning to cry. The Duke laughed in bitter triumph, saying to Lorenzo, 'Indeed it is a princely drug that makes Antonio of Monte Velluto like a peevish child!' And being now very secure of the power of the drug, he bade Lorenzo loosen the bonds, saying to Antonio, 'Take the reins, Antonio, and ride with us into the city.'

And Antonio answered, 'I will, my good lord.'

'It is even as I saw when I was with the Lord of Florence,' whispered the Duke in exultation.

'Yet I will still have my sword ready,' said Lorenzo.

'There is no need; he is like a tame dog,' said the Duke carelessly.

But the Duke was not minded to produce Antonio to the people till all his Guards were collected and under arms, and the people thus restrained by a great show of force. Therefore he bade Antonio cover his face with his cloak; and Antonio, Lorenzo's sword being still at his breast, obeyed; and thus they three rode through the gates of Firmola and came to the Duke's Palace; and Antonio did all that the Duke ordered, and babbled foolishly like a

bewildered child when the Duke asked him questions, so that His Highness laughed mightily, and, coming into the garden, sat down in his favourite place by the fish-pond, causing Antonio to stand over against him.

'Indeed, Antonio,' said he, 'I can do no other than hang you.'

'If it be your pleasure, my lord.'

'And then Lucia shall drink of this wonderful drug also, and she will be content and obedient, and will gladly wed Lorenzo. Let us have her here now, and give it to her without delay. You do not fret at that, Antonio? You love not the obstinate girl?'

'In truth, no,' laughed Antonio. 'She is naught to me!' And he put his hand to his head, saying perplexedly, 'Lucia? Yes, I remember that name. Who was she? Was she aught to me, my lord?'

Then Lorenzo wondered greatly, and the doubts that he had held concerning the power of the wizard's drug melted away; yet he did not laugh like the Duke, but looked on Antonio and said sadly to the Duke, sinking his voice, 'Not thus should Antonio of Monte Veluto have died.'

'So he dies, I care not how,' answered the Duke. 'Indeed, I love to see him a witless fool even while his body is yet alive. O rare wizard, I go near to repenting having done justice on you! Go, Lorenzo, to the officer of the Guard and bid him fetch hither the lady Lucia, and we will play the pretty comedy to the end.'

'Will you be alone with him?' asked Lorenzo.

'Ay; why not? See! he is tame enough,' and he buffeted Antonio in the face with his riding-glove. And Antonio whimpered and whined.

Now the officer of the Guard was in his lodge at the entrance of the Palace, on the other side of the great hall; and Lorenzo turned and went, and presently the sound of his feet on the marble floor of the hall grew faint and distant. The Duke sat with the phial in his hand, smiling at Antonio, who crouched at his feet. And Antonio drew himself on his knees quite close to the Duke, and looked up in his face with a foolish empty smile. And the Duke, laughing, buffeted him again. Then, with a sudden spring like the spring of that Indian tiger which the Mogul of Delhi sent lately as a gift to the Most Christian King, and the king, for his diversion, made to slay deer before him at the *château* of Blois (which I myself saw, being there on a certain mission, and wonderful was the sight), Count Antonio, leaping, was upon the Duke; and he snatched the philtre from the Duke's hand and seized the Duke's head in his hands and wrenched his jaw open, and he poured the contents of the phial down the Duke's throat, and the Duke swallowed the potion. Then Antonio fixed a stern and commanding glance on the Duke, nailing his eyes to the Duke's, and the Duke's to his, and he said in a voice of command, 'Obey! You have drunk the potion! And still he kept his eyes on the Duke's. And the Duke, amazed, suddenly began to tremble, and sought to rise;

and Antonio took his hands off him, but said, 'Sit there, and move not.' Then, although Antonio's hands were no longer upon him, yet His Highness did not rise, but, after a short struggle with himself, sank back in his seat, and stared at Antonio like a bird fascinated by a snake. And he moaned, 'Take away your eyes; they burn my brain. Take them away.' But Antonio gazed all the more intently at him, saying, 'Be still, be still!' and holding up his arm in enforcement of his command. And Antonio took from the Duke the sword that he wore and the dagger wherewith the Duke had killed the Wizard of Baratesta, the Duke making no resistance, but sitting motionless with bewildered stare. Then Antonio looked round, for he knew that Lorenzo would soon come. And for the last time he bent his eyes again on the Duke's eyes in a very long gaze, and the Duke cowered and shivered, moaning, 'You hurt me, you hurt me.'

Then Antonio said, 'Be still and speak not till I return and bid you;' and he suddenly left the Duke and ran at the top of his speed along under the wall of the garden, and came where the wall ended; and there was a flight of steps leading up on to the top of the wall. Running up them, Antonio stood for a moment on the wall; and the river ran fifty feet below. But he heard a cry from the garden, and beheld Lorenzo rushing up to the Duke, and behind Lorenzo, the Captain of the Guard and two men who led a maiden in white. Then Count Antonio, having commended himself to the keeping of God, leaped head foremost from the top of the wall into the river; and his body clove the water as an arrow cleaves the wand.

Now Lorenzo marvelled greatly at what he saw, and came to the Duke crying, 'My lord, what does this mean? Antonio flies!' But the Duke answered nothing, sitting with empty eyes and lips set in a rigid smile; nor did he move. 'My lord, what ails you?' cried Lorenzo. Yet the Duke did not answer. Then Lorenzo's eye fell on the fragments of the phial which lay broken on the rim of the fish-pond where Antonio had flung it; and he cried out in great alarm, 'The potion! Where is the potion?' And the Duke did not answer. And Lorenzo was much bewildered and in sore fear; for it seemed as though His Highness's senses were gone; and Lorenzo said, 'By some means he has drunk the potion!' And he ran up to the Duke, and caught him by the arm and shook him violently, seeking to rouse him from his stupor, and calling his name with entreaties, and crying, 'He escapes, my lord; Antonio escapes! Rouse yourself, my lord—he escapes!' But the Duke did no more than lift heavy dull eyes to Lorenzo's face in puzzled inquiry.

And, seeing the strange thing, the Captain of the Guard hurried up, and with him the Lady Lucia, and she said, 'Alas, my lord is ill!' and coming to His Highness, she set her cool soft hand on his hot throbbing brow, and took perfume from a silver flask that hung at her girdle, and wetted her handkerchief with it and bathed his brow, whispering soft soothing words to him, as though he had been a sick woman. For let a woman have what grudge she may against

a man, yet he gains pardon for all as soon as he becomes sick enough to let her nurse and comfort him; and Lucia was as tender to the Duke as to the Count Antonio himself, and forgot all, save the need of giving him ease and rousing him from his stupor.

But Lorenzo cried angrily, 'I at least have my senses!' And he said to the Captain of the Guard, 'I must needs stay with His Highness; but Antonio of Monte Velluto has leaped from the wall into the river. Go and bring him here, dead or alive, and I will be your warrant to the Duke. But if he be as when I saw him last, he will give you small trouble. For he was like a child for weakness and folly.' And having said this, he turned to the Duke again, and gave his aid to Lucia's ministrations.

Now the gentleman who commanded the Duke's Guard at this time was a Spaniard, by name Corogna, and he was young, of high courage, and burning to do some great deed. Therefore he said, 'I pray he be as he is wont to be: yet I will bring him to the feet of my lord the Duke.' And he ran swiftly through the hall and called for his horse, and, drawing his sword, rode alone out of the city and across the bridge, seeking Antonio, and saying to himself, 'What a thing if I take him! And if he slay me—why, I will show that a gentleman of Andalusia can die'—yet he thought for an instant of the house where his mother lived. Then he scanned the plain, and he beheld a man running some half-mile away; and the man seemed to be making for the hill on which stood the ruins of Antonio's house that the Duke had burnt. Then Corogna set spurs to his horse; but the man, whom by his stature and gait Corogna knew to be Antonio, ran very swiftly, and was not overtaken before he came to the hill; and he began to mount by a very steep rugged path, and he was out of sight in the trees when Corogna came to the foot. And Corogna's horse stumbled among the stones, and could not mount the path; so Corogna leaped off his back and ran on foot up the path, sword in hand. And he came in sight of Antonio round a curve of the path, three parts of the way up the hill. Antonio was leaning against the trunk of a tree and wringing the water out of his cloak. Corogna drew near, sword in hand, and with a prayer to the Holy Virgin on his lips. And he trembled, not with fear, but because fate offered a great prize, and his name would be famed throughout Italy if he slew or took Antonio of Monte Velluto; and for fame, even as for a woman's smile, a young man will tremble as a coward quakes for fear.

The Count Antonio stood as though sunk in a reverie; yet, presently, hearing Corogna's tread, he raised his eyes, and smiling kindly on the young man, he said, 'Very strange are the ways of Heaven, sir. I think that the Wizard of Baratesta spoke truth, and did not lie to the Duke. Yet I had that same power which the wizard claimed, although the Duke had none over me. We are children, sir, and our game is blind-man's buff; but all are blinded, and it is but the narrowest glimpse that we obtain now and again by some clever shifting of the handkerchief. Yet there are some things clear

enough—as that a man should do his work, and be clean and true.—What would you with me, sir? For I do not think I know you.'

'I am of Andalusia, and my name is Corogna. I am Captain of His Highness's Guard, and I come to bring you, alive or dead, to his presence.'

'And are you come alone on that errand, sir?' asked Antonio, with a smile that he strove to smother, lest it should wound the young man's honour.

'David slew Goliath, my lord,' said the Spaniard with a bow.

Then Count Antonio held out his hand to the young man and said courteously, 'Sir, your valour needs no proof and fears no reproach. I pray you suffer me to go in peace. I would not fight with you, if I may avoid it honourably. For what has happened has left me more in the mood for thinking than for fighting. Besides, sir, you are young, and, far off in Andalusia, loving eyes, and maybe sparkling eyes, are strained to the horizon, seeking your face as you return.'

'What is all that, my lord?' asked Corogna. 'I am a man, though a young one; and I am here to carry you to the Duke.' And he touched Antonio's sword with his, saying, 'Guard yourself.'

'It is with great pain and reluctance that I take my sword, and I call you to witness of it; but if I must, I must;' and the Count took up his position and they crossed swords.

Now Corogna was well taught and skilful, but he did not know the cunning which Antonio had learned at the school of Giacomo in Padua, nor had he the strength and endurance of the Count. Antonio would fain have wearied him out, and then, giving him some slight wound to cover his honour, have left him and escaped; but the young man came at him impetuously, and neglected to guard himself while he thrust at his enemy: once and again the Count spared him; but he did not know that he had received the courtesy, and taking heart from his immunity, came at Antonio more fiercely again; until at last Antonio, breathing a sigh, stiffened his arm, and, waiting warily for the young man again to uncover himself, thrust at his breast, and the sword's point entered hard by the young man's heart; and the young man staggered, and would have fallen, dropping his sword; but Antonio cast away his own sword and supported him, stanching the blood from the wound and crying, 'God send I have not killed him!'

And on his speech came the voice of Tommasino, saying carelessly, 'Here, in truth, cousin, is a good prayer wasted on a Spaniard!'

Antonio, looking up, saw Tommasino and Bena. And Tommasino said, 'When you did not come back, we set out to seek you, fearing that you were fallen into some snare and danger. And behold, we find you nursing this young spark; and how you missed his heart, Antonio, I know not, nor what Giacomo of Padua would say to such bungling.'

But Antonio cared not for his cousin's words, which were spoken in the banter that a man uses to hide his true feelings; and they three set themselves to save the young man's life;

for Tommasino and Bena had seen the better part of the fight, and perceived that he was a gallant youth. But as they tended him, there came shouts and the sound of horses' hoofs mounting the hill by the winding road that led past Antonio's house. And Tommasino touched Antonio on the shoulder, saying, 'We can do no more for him; and if we linger, we must fight again.'

Then they laid the young man down, Antonio stripping off his cloak and making a pillow of it; and Bena brought the horses, for they had led one with them for Antonio, in case there should be need of it; and they were but just mounted when twenty of the Duke's Guard appeared three hundred yards away, ascending the crest of the hill.

'Thank Heaven there are so many,' said Antonio, 'for now we can flee without shame;' and they set spurs to their horses and fled. And certain of the Duke's Guard pursued, but only two or three were so well mounted as to be able to come near them; and these two or three, finding that they would be man to man, had no liking for the business, and each called out that his horse was foundered; and thus it was that none of them came up with Count Antonio, but all, after a while, returned together to the city, carrying the young Spaniard Corogna, their Captain. But as they drew near to the gates, Corogna opened his eyes and murmured some soft-syllabled name that they could not hear, and, having with failing fingers signed the cross, turned on his side and died. And they brought his body to the great hall of the Duke's Palace.

There in the great hall sat Duke Valentine: his face was pale and his frown heavy, and he gazed on the dead body of the young man and spoke no word. Yet he had loved Corogna, and out of love for him had made him Captain of his Guard. And he passed his hand wearily across his brow, murmuring, 'I cannot think, I cannot think.' And the Lady Lucia stood by him, her hand resting on his shoulder and her eyes full of tears. But at last the strange spell which lay on the senses of the Duke passed away: his eyes again had the light of reason in them, and he listened while they told him how Antonio had himself escaped, and had afterwards slain Corogna on the top of the hill where Antonio's house had stood. And the Duke was very sorry for Corogna's death: and he looked round on them all, saying, 'He made of me a log of wood, and not a man. For when I had drunk and looked in his eyes, it seemed to me that my eyes were bound to his, and that I looked to him for command, and to know what I should do, and that he was my God, and without his will I could not move. Yes, I was then to him even as he had seemed to be to me as we rode from Baratesta. And even now I am not free from this strange affection; for he seems still to be by me, and if his voice came now bidding me to do anything, by St Prisian, I should arise and do it! Send my physician to me. And let this young man lie in the Chapel of the Blessed Virgin in the Cathedral, and to-morrow he shall be buried. And when I am well, and this strange affection is passed from me, and hangs no more

like a fog over my brain, then I will exact the price of his death from Antonio, together with the reckoning of all else in respect of which he stands in my debt.'

But the Lady Lucia, hearing this, said boldly, 'My lord, it is by your deed and through your devices that this gentleman has met his death, and the blame of it is yours, and not my lord Antonio's.'

At her bold and angry words Duke Valentine was roused, and the last of his languor left him; and he glared at her in wrath, crying, 'Go to your house;' and he rose up suddenly from where he sat and went into his cabinet, Lorenzo attending him. And on the day after he walked first behind the bier of Corogna, and his face was very pale, but his air composed and his manner as it was wont to be. For the spell had passed and he was his own man again.

But Count Antonio heard with great grief of the death of the young man, and was very sorry that he had been constrained to kill him, and took great blame to himself for seeking counsel of the Wizard of Baratesta, whence had come death to the young man no less than to the wizard himself.

Such is the story of the drug which the Wizard of Baratesta gave to Duke Valentine of Firmola. To me it seems a strange tale, but yet it is well attested, and stands on as strong a rock of testimony as anything which is told concerning the Count. The truth of it I do not understand, and often I ponder of it, wondering whether the Wizard of Baratesta spoke truth, and why the drug which had no power over Count Antonio bound the senses and limbs of the Duke in utter torpor and helplessness. And once, when I was thus musing over the story, there came to my cell a monk of the Abbey of St Prisian, who was an old man and very learned; and I went to walk with him in the garden, and, coming to the fountain, we sat down by the basin; and knowing that his lore was wide and deep, I set before him all the story, asking him if he knew of this strange drug; but he smiled at me, and taking the cup that lay by the basin of the fountain, he filled it with the clear sparkling water and drank a little, and held the cup to me, saying, 'I think the Wizard of Baratesta would have wrought the spell as well with no other drug than this.'

'You say a strange thing,' said I.

'And I do not marvel,' said he, 'that the Duke had no power over Count Antonio, for he knew not how to wield such power. But neither do I wonder that power lay in Count Antonio to bend the mind of the Duke to his will. I warrant you, Anselm, that the wonderful drug was not difficult to compound.'

Then I understood what he meant; for he would have it that the drug was but a screen and a pretence, and that the power lay not in it, but in the man that gave it. Yet surely this is to explain what is obscure by a thing more obscure, and falls thus into a fault hated of the logicians. For Heaven may well have made a drug that binds the senses and limbs of men—has not the poppy some such effect? And the ancients fabled the like of the lotus plant.

But can we conceive that one man should by the mere glance of his eye have such power over another as to become to him, by this means and no other, a lord and master? In truth I find that hard to believe, and I doubt whether a man may lawfully believe it. Yet I know not. Knowledge spreads, and men grow wiser in hidden things; and although I who write may not live till the time when the thing shall be made clear, yet it may be God's will to send such light to the men of later days that, reading this story, they may find in it nothing that is strange or unknown to their science and skill. I pray that they may use the knowledge God sends in His holy service, and not in the work of the devil, as did the Wizard of Baratesta.

But Count Antonio being, by his guile and adroitness, and by that strange power which he had from the drug or whence I know not, delivered out of the hands of Duke Valentine, abode with his company on the hills throughout the cold of winter, expecting the day when he might win the hand of the Lady Lucia; and she returned to her house, and said nothing of what had befallen the Duke. Yet the Duke showed her no tenderness, but rather used more severity with her. It is an evil service to a proud man to aid him in his day of humiliation.

(To be continued.)

A JAPANESE INFERNO.

Does it not seem to you, who have a sensitive mind and love to dream of the fitness of things, that the gentle moon is distinctively a Japanese orb, whose especial pleasure it must be to shine on a gentle land, through the graceful stems of bamboo; to kiss the snowy brow of Fuji-yama, cold as chastity; to glimmer in the dusky rice-fields, where the sleeping heron stands like a huge dark flower on its slender stalk?

To me, standing at midnight in this lone valley, it seems so congruous that its strange shapes of leaf and rock, its little misshapen Buddhas, its quaint prayer-writings brushed here and there on to the smooth stones, should be revealed only in these soft subduing beams. Here the gaudy sun seems too harsh, too prosaic in its pitiless revelation of the commonplace and the ugly.

An old Japanese poet, unknown, but loved, has yielded to the charm of moonlight in words that suggest a delicate monochrome on scroll or fan: 'The moon, on an autumn night, rendering visible even the number of the wild geese as they fly past, their dark wings intercrossed on the white clouds!' Thus he presents the thought that rises within him, alone, without initial or tail-piece; even as his fellow-artist traces a shadowy circle and lightly throws across it the wings of a stork, or a few shivering reeds, careless of horizon or middle-distance, contemptuous of a posturing observer in the foreground.

Slowly floating across the night, the moon pauses to peep through the parted lips of the great volcano Osamiyama—lips that are always breathing forth a smoke-cloud, dimly lit by a dull glare from the centre of the earth; then

throws her pitying glance on this lonely village of Kusatsu, as it sleeps in a cup formed by volcanic hills. This is the abode of woe; this the Japanese *citta dolente*, whose daily scenes seem to invoke the spirits of the mighty Florentine and his Virgil, to gaze upon the tortures of the damned.

For to Kusatsu flock, from all parts of Japan, men and women whom retributive nature has visited with her deadliest scourges. No fashionable watering-place is here, no pleasure-cure for sauntering convalescents, but a hard, grim round of pain—pain such as few Europeans could voluntarily undergo, be their hope and their fortitude ever so high.

This is the vision of the past day. Picture to yourself a little Japanese town whose situation, steep streets, and overhanging red roofs, suggest memories of some village in the Tyrol. In the centre a large square, from which rises a perpetual cloud of steam; for here, within a vast wood-lined tank, are collected the seething waters of the hot sulphur-springs that bubble forth from the surrounding hills. The stain of the sulphur is thick on the woodwork; the stench of it fills the air; yea, the whole hollow is clogged with the suffocating odour. Yet there is beauty in the scene; in the wondrous glittering of the waters; the deep red roofs glowing in the morning sun; the faint purple hills beyond; the great yellow square, flecked with those bright clinging draperies that render every Japanese crowd a perpetual feast of colour and line.

Eight o'clock is the first hour for bathing in the central bath-house near the great tanks. A low-pitched horn winds dismally through the streets and across the echoing hills, and slowly there appear from all sides the poor wretches who form the first batch of bathers. Many of them are terrible to look upon as they troop into the bath-house.

Entering with them, one makes out through the thick, rolling vapours a dozen baths—rectangular pits about five feet deep and six or eight feet long—which are contrived in the wooden flooring. Standing on planks round these baths are a crowd of naked youths, each of whom grasps a wooden board, with which he churns up the seething waters. They all keep time in a swaying, up-and-down motion; through the noise of the plunging boards and the rush of water is heard their lugubrious chant. Their purpose is benevolent—namely, to make the smoking pits yield up a few degrees of their heat. Yet the dark, grimacing faces, the naked, swaying figures half shrouded in steam, the suffocating smell, the wailing voices mingling with the general din of waters—all this renders it difficult not to believe that a crowd of gibbering demons are preparing new tortures for the shivering victims who stand behind them, watching with lack-lustre eyes the scene that they know so well as preliminary to their sufferings.

Suddenly, with a loud shout, all the boards are jerked out and dragged away out of sight. At once the bathers crouch down at the edges and begin to bathe their scalps and necks in the fiery liquid, to obviate a rush of blood to the head. This done, they coil long linen rags,

wringing wet, round their brows, and await the next signal.

Now, as the vapours grow less dense, one perceives at the far end of the building a hatchet-faced, gap-toothed man, standing with folded arms, grasping in one hand a rod of office. Above him is a clock with a large second-hand. Slowly his gaze travels round the naked figures who are standing and kneeling by the baths, intently watchful of his movements. The rod is lifted; instantly they begin to lower themselves into the water, each in his or her allotted place. One bath can contain four or five bathers, standing upright; and oh! how slowly, how almost imperceptibly, do their feet, legs, bodies, and arms sink beneath the smoking surface! The pain is excruciating; the least ripple caused by a hasty movement would be beyond human endurance. One or two poor wretches can hardly force themselves below.

At last they touch the bottom; all are immersed up to the chin; nothing is visible save a crowd of bandaged human faces, motionless, almost expressionless, the eyes staring dully in front; here and there a brow wrinkled in pain; the wreathing vapours wind slowly up. . . . Silence reigns.

Watching so much pain, one suffers too, knowing its extremity. For the water of these baths stands, after cooling, at the incredible temperature of from 125 to 130 degrees Fahrenheit, and contains moreover fifteen per cent. of natural sulphuric acid.

Only by submitting to regimental discipline can this marvellously resolute people compel their bodies to such anguish. I was told of one European—only one—who was courageous enough to undergo the penance.

All at once the lean-visaged form that presides calls harshly to the crowd below—his voice cuts the stillness like a knife—'One minute has now passed!' And the sea of motionless heads answer him back—'Ha-a-ai!' in a long, loud, unearthly wail, that echoes round the building.

How weirdly impassive is the Mongolian type! Though in these nearer faces the swollen veins are bursting through the dull yellow skin, yet one can detect no tension of feature, no writhing of lips, no setting of teeth hard, to conquer the torment. Their heavy jaws droop, their eyes are half-closed; there is no speculation in those dull, narrow orbs.

Slowly the reluctant hand drags itself afresh round the dial; never were seconds so prolonged, never minutes so interminable. Then again the harsh voice comes through the mist—'Two minutes have now passed!' And again rises the answering 'Ha-a-ai!'

A small child appears at one of the doors and asks some question in a pretty, pleading voice. One of the heads murmurs in answer; a woman's head—its mother's. The child flutters off with a pleased smile.

The third minute passes; at the last second of the fourth the leader exclaims, 'Condescend now to leave the honourable water!' His words are drowned in the universal leap of the tortured bodies, as they swing themselves out of their Stygian pits on to the slippery planking.

Five times a day this gruesome scene is repeated.

But to see it once is enough; outside, the sun is bright and the streets are full of picturesque life. Brightly clad children are running about like flower-petals chased by the wind. Yet, it is a joyless sight. On many of the throng are only too plainly writ the reasons of their presence here; and, as one gazes round, there recur involuntarily to the mind certain terrible lines from Tennyson's *Vision of Sin*.

One part of the village is a leper settlement, and the appearance of these unfortunates is hideous beyond belief. Their legs, arms, and faces are covered with deep brown spots, caused by burnings with *moxa*—a plant similar to our mugwort; pieces of which are rolled into a cone, applied to the skin, and ignited. The faith in this torture seems to be as strong as in the medicinal power of the hot springs.

Descartes might have said, 'Je souffre, donc je suis.' And though, by curious imaginings, one may persuade one's self of many things, and of the unreality of most, yet Pain looks on with a grim sneer at the would-be soarer in ecstatic clouds, knowing that one breath from her hot lips will shrivel up the poor fool's wings and stretch him, abject and quivering, at her feet.

Nevertheless, mercy is vouchsafed us in the magic of the night.

Standing now, at this late hour, in the midst of the high valley that pours its sulphur-laden waters down to the reservoirs, the past day seems an evil dream. The moonlit rills bubble along like veins of silver in the pale sand. From the thick bushes on the hill-sides comes the *crik-crik* of a few drowsy cicadas. Farther up the valley loom the strange shapes of the 'children's pillars'—small rocks and stones piled up in columns by pious mothers in memory of their dead offspring. And the little town and all the encircling hills are bathed in the comforting moonlight.

To gaze at the pale, heavenly face that gazes back so benignly—to watch the myriad stars as they 'attain their mighty life,' floods the mind with a great joy, in whose depths all grosser memories seem vain and unreal. Let us yield to the spell; let suffering be but as an evil day-dream, born of a cynical, distorting sun; and gentle night, that nurses the senses to sleep, be the only true reality. C. H. F.

THE GOVERNESS AT GREENBUSH.

CHAPTER IV.—CONCLUSION.

A HORSE's mane and withers, rubbed by the rider's beard as he stooped to peer into the hut, deepened the gray dusk within and made the lamp burn brighter. Then came the squatter's voice, in tremulous, forced tones, as of a man who can ill trust himself to speak: 'And so, Miss Winfrey, you are here!'

The Governess came close to the threshold and faced her employer squarely, though without a word. Then her song had awakened a memory, but nothing more! So ran her thoughts.

'Your explanation, Miss Winfrey?'

'We knew each other years ago.' And she

waved with her hand towards the man who would not stand beside her in her shame.

'When did you find that out, Miss Winfrey?'

'Yesterday afternoon.'

'Ah, when he came in for his cheque. I may tell you that I saw something of it from the store; and my wife happened to overhear some more when she went to fetch you and my daughter in to dinner.'

'That was very clever of Mrs Pickering!'

'It was an accident; she couldn't help hearing.'

'I daresay!' cried the Governess, flaring up all at once. 'But I shall tell her what I think of such accidents when I see her again!'

There was no immediate answer; and the girl took a cold alarm; for a soft meaning laugh came through the door; and either behind her, or in her imagination, there was an echo which hurt her ten times more.

'May I ask,' said Mr Pickering, 'when you expect to see my wife again?'

'Never!' said the girl, as though she had known that all along; but she had not thought of it before, and the thing stunned her even as she spoke.

'Never,' repeated the squatter, with immense solemnity. 'You've treated her very badly, Miss Winfrey; she feels it very much. You might at least have consulted her before going to such a length as this. A length which has nothing to do with me, mark you; but I must say it is one of the most scandalous things I ever heard of in all my life. I'm sorry to speak so strongly. I'm sorry to lose you for the children; but you must see that you're no longer quite the sort of person we want for them. You will find your boxes on the coach which leaves the township this evening, and your cheque'—

'Stop!' said a hoarse voice fiercely. At the same moment Miss Winfrey was forced to one side, and Wilfred Ferrers filled her place: she had never admired him so much as now, with his doubled fists, and his rough dress, and the cold dawn shining on his handsome, haggard face. 'You've said quite enough,' he continued; 'now it's my turn, Mr Pickering. Miss Winfrey hasn't been at the hut ten minutes. She came because we were old friends, to try and make me the man I was when she knew me before. Unfortunately it's a bit too late; but she wasn't to know that, and she's done no wrong. Now apologise—or settle it with me!' and he laid hold of the bridle.

'You may let go those reins,' replied Pickering. 'I'm not frightened of you, though you have the better of me by twenty years. But I think you're on the right side in a more important respect than that; and if I've done Miss Winfrey an injustice, I hope I'm man enough to apologise in my own way.' He slid from his horse, and walked into the hut with his wideawake in one hand, and the other outstretched. 'I beg your pardon,' he said.

'I don't blame you,' she replied.

He kept her hand kindly. 'Perhaps we shall meet again,' said he. 'I hope so! I don't know how it stands between you two, but I can give a guess. You're a good girl;

and we've always known what Bill was underneath. Good luck to you both! I shall send another man out here to-night.'

The girl stood still and heard him ride away. The soft words stung worse than the harsh, she hardly knew why. She was bewildered and aching in heart and body and brain. On some point she should have enlightened Mr Pickering, but she had let it be, and now what was it?

Ferrers had accompanied the squatter outside; had seen him off; and yet now he was standing in front of her with a look she remembered in his sunken eyes. 'Two men have insulted you this morning,' he was saying. 'One has apologised; it is the other's turn now. Forgive me, Lena!'

It was his old voice. The tears rushed to her eyes, and she stepped out blindly for the door. 'I have nothing to forgive!' she cried. 'Let me go. Only let me go!'

'Go where?'

'To the township—anywhere! I should have told Mr Pickering. Call him back!—Ah, he's so far away already! What am I to do? What am I to do?'

Ferrers pushed the wooden box into the doorway, where she stood leaning heavily against the jamb. 'Sit down on that,' said he, 'while I brew you some tea. You're tired to death. Time enough to think of things after.'

The girl sat down, and for a while she cried gently to herself. Her physical fatigue was enormous, rendering her perfectly helpless for the time being, with a helplessness which she resented more bitterly than the incomparable mental torments of the situation. These she deserved. If only she could get away, and turn this bitter page before it drove her mad! If only she could creep away, and close her eyes for hours or for ever! But it was impossible; and that was at once the refinement of her present punishment, and, surely, the ultimate expiation of her early sin.

The red sun burst out of the plains, as it were under her very eyes, blinding them. But she would not look round. She heard matches struck, sticks crackling, and later, the 'billy' bubbling on the fire. She knew when the 'slush-lamp'—a strip of moleskin in a tin of mutton fat—was put out; her sense of smell informed her of the fact. She heard a rasher frizzling at the fire, and the cutting of the damper on the table; but not until Ferrers touched her on the shoulder, telling her that breakfast was ready, would she turn her head or speak a word. The touch made her quiver to the core. He apologised, explaining that he had spoken thrice. Then they sat down; and the girl ate ravenously; but Ferrers did little but make conversation, speaking now of the Pickerings, and now of some common friends in London; the people, in fact, who had brought these two together.

'They knew I had come out here; didn't they tell you?'

'I never went near them again.'

This answer set Ferrers thinking; and, after refilling the girl's pannikin and cutting more damper, he took a saddle from a long peg. He must catch his horse, he said; he would come back and see how she was getting on.

He did not come back for nearly an hour: the horse was a young one, and the horse-paddock, which was some little distance beyond the hut, was absurdly large. He returned ultimately at a gallop, springing off, with a new eagerness in his face, at the door of the hut. It was empty. He searched the hut, but the girl was gone. Then he remounted, and rode headlong down the fence; and something that he saw soon enough made his spurs draw blood. She was lying in the full glare of the morning sun, sound asleep. He had difficulty in awakening her, and greater difficulty in dissuading her from lying down again where she was.

'Have you spent half a summer up here without learning to respect the Riverina sun? You mustn't think of going to sleep in it again. It's as much as your life is worth.'

'Which is very little,' murmured Miss Winfrey, letting some sand slip through her fingers, as if symbolically.

'Look here!' said Ferrers. 'I shall be out all day, seeing to the sheep and riding the boundaries. There's a room at the back of my hut which the boss and those young fellows use whenever they stay there. They keep some blankets in it, but I have the key. The coach doesn't go till eight o'clock to-night. Why not lie down there till five or six?'

'I'm not a fool in everything,' said the girl at length, with a wan smile. 'I'll do that.'

'Then jump on my horse.'

'That I can't do!'

'I'll give you a hand.'

'I should fall off!'

'Not at a walk. Besides, I'll lead him. Recollect you've nine miles before you this evening!'

She gave in. The room proved comfortable. She fell asleep to the sound of his horse's canter, lost in a few strides in the sand, but continuous in her brain. And this time she slept for many hours.

It was a heavy, dreamless sleep, from which she at last awoke refreshed, but entirely non-plussed as to her whereabouts. The room was very small and hot. It was also remarkably silent, but for the occasional crackling of the galvanised roof; and rather dark, but for the holes which riddled that roof like stars, letting in so many sunbeams as thin as fingers. Miss Winfrey held her watch in one of them, but it had stopped for want of winding. Then she opened the door, and the blazing sun was no higher in the west than it had been in the east when last she saw it.

On a narrow bench outside her door stood a tin basin, with a bit of soap in it, cut fresh from the bar; a coarse but clean towel; and a bucket of water underneath. The girl crept back into the room, and knelt in prayer before using these things. In the forenoon none of them had been there.

Going round presently to the front of the hut, the first thing she saw was the stock-rider's boots, with the spurs on them, standing just outside the door; within, there was a merry glare, and Wilfred Ferrers cooking the chops in his stocking soles before a splendid fire.

'Well!' she exclaimed in the doorway, for she could not help it.

'Awake at last!' he cried, turning a face

ruddy from the fire. 'You've had your eight hours. It's nearly five o'clock.'

'Then I must start instantly.'

'Time enough when we've had something to eat.'

The first person plural disconcerted her. Was he coming too? Mr Pickering had taken it for granted that they would go together; he was sending out another man to look after the outstation; but then Mr Pickering was labouring under a delusion; he did not understand. Wilfred was very kind, considering that his love for her was dead and buried in the dead past. The gentleman was not dead in him, at all events. How cleverly he managed those hissing chops! He looked younger in the firelight, years younger than in the cold gray dawn. But no wonder his love of her was dead and gone.

'Now we're ready,' he cried at last. 'Quick, while they're hot, Lena!' His tone had changed entirely since the early morning; it was brisker now, but markedly civil and considerate. He proceeded to apologise for making use of her Christian name; it had slipped out, he said, without his thinking. At this fresh evidence of his indifference, the girl forced a smile, and declared it did not matter. 'Surely we can still be friends,' said she.

'Yes, friends in adversity!' he laughed. 'Don't you feel as if we'd been wrecked together on a desert island? I do. But what do you think of the chops?'

'Very good for a desert island.'

She was trying to adopt his tone; it was actually gay; and herein his degeneracy was more apparent to her than in anything that had gone before. He could not put himself in her place; the cruel dilemma that she was in, for his sake, was evidently nothing to him; his solitary dog's life had deprived him of the power of feeling for another. And yet the thought of those boots outside in the sand contradicted this reflection; for he had put them on soon after her return, thus showing her on whose account he had taken them off.

Moreover, his next remark was entirely sympathetic. 'It's very hard on you!' he exclaimed. 'What do you mean to do?'

'I suppose I must go back to Melbourne.'

'And then?'

'Get another place—if I can.'

He said no more; but he waited upon her with heightened assiduity during the remainder of their simple meal; and when they set out together—he with all his worldly goods in a roll of blankets across his shoulders—she made another effort to strike his own note of kindly interest and impersonal sympathy. 'And you,' she said as they walked; 'what will you do?'

'Get a job at the next station; there'll be no difficulty about that.'

'I'm thankful to hear it.'

'But I am in a difficulty about you!'

He paused so long that her heart fluttered, and she knew not what was coming. They passed the place where her resolution had given way in the dark hour before the dawn; she recognised that other spot, where, later, he had found her asleep in the sun; but the first fence was in sight before he spoke.

'I can't stand the idea of your putting in

another appearance in the township,' he exclaimed at last, thrilling her with the words, which expressed perhaps the greatest of her own immediate dreads. 'It won't do at all. Things will have got about. You must avoid the township at all costs.'

'How can I?'

'By striking the road much lower down. It will mean bearing to the right, and no more beaten tracks after we get through this gate. But the distance will be the same, and I know the way.'

'But my trunks'—

'The boss said he would have them put on the coach. They'll probably be aboard whether you are or no. If they aren't, I'll have them sent after you.'

'I shall be taking you out of your way,' objected the girl.

'Never mind. Will you trust me?'

'Most gratefully!'

She had need to be grateful. Yes, he was very kind; nevertheless, he was breaking her heart with his kindness: her heart, that she had read backward five years ago, but aright ever since. It was all his. Either the sentiment which was one of her inherent qualities, or the generosity which was another, or both, had built up a passion for the man she had jilted, far stronger than any feeling she could have entertained for him in the early days of their love. She had yearned to make atonement, and having prayed, for years, only to meet him again, to that end, she had regarded her prayer now as answered. But answered how cruelly! Quite an age ago, he must have ceased to care; what was worse, he had no longer any strong feelings about her, one way or the other. This, indeed, was the worst of all. His first hot scorn, his momentary brutality, had been better than this. She had made him feel then. He felt nothing now. And here they were trudging side by side, as silent as the grave that held their withered love.

They came to the road but a few minutes before the coach was due. Ferrers carried no watch; but he had timed their journey accurately by the sun. It was now not a hand's-breadth above the dun horizon; the wind had changed, and was blowing fresh from the south; and it was grateful to sit in the elongated shadows of two blue-bushes which commanded a fair view of the road. They had been on the tramp upwards of two hours; during the second hour they had never spoken but once, when he handed her his water-bag; and now he handed it again.

'Thank you,' she said, passing it back after her draught. 'You have been very kind!'

'Ah, Lena!' he cried, without a moment's warning, 'had you been a kinder girl, or I a stronger man, we should have been happy enough first or last! Now it's too late. I have sunk too low. I'd rather sink lower still than trade upon your pity.'

'Is that all?'

'That's all.'

He pointed to a whirl of sand half a mile up the road. It grew larger, giving glimpses of half-harnessed horse-flesh and heavily revolving wheels. The girl's lips moved; she could hear

the driver's whip, cracking louder and louder; but the words came hard.

'It is not true,' she murmured at last. 'That is not all. You—do not—care!'

He turned upon her his old, hungry eyes, so sunken now. 'I do!' he said hoarsely. 'Too much—to drag you down. No! let me sink alone; I shall soon touch bottom.'

She got to her feet. The coach was very near them now, the off-lamp showing up the vermilion panels; the bits tinkling between the leaders' teeth; the body of the vehicle swinging and swaying on its leather springs. The Governess got to her feet, and pointed to the coach with a helpless gesture.

'And I?' said she. '*What's to become of me?*'

The south wind was freshening with the fall of night; at that very moment it blew off the driver's wideawake, and the coach was delayed three minutes. A few yards farther it was stopped again, and at this second exasperation the driver's language went from bad to worse; for the coach was behind its time.

'What now? Passengers?'

'Yes.'

'The owner of the boxes?'

'Yes.'

'And you too? Where's your cheque?'

There was a moment's colloquy between the two dusky figures in the road; then the man took a slip of paper from the left-hand pocket in his moleskins, and held it to the off-lamp for the driver's inspection. 'The two of us,' he said.

'All right; jump up!'

And with his blankets round her, and her hand in his, the little Governess, and her lost love who was found, passed at star-rise through the Greenbush boundary-gate, and on and on into another life.

MIRRORS, ANCIENT AND MODERN.

ACCORDING to the learned Beckmann, it is highly probable that a limpid brook was the first mirror. Primitive man, or rather woman, was not content for long with that inconvenient looking-glass, and it is very likely that early in the Stone Age vanity and ingenuity found an artificial substitute for the meandering brook. Some stones answer fairly well for the purpose, and, in fact, we read in ancient writers of stone mirrors. Pliny mentions the obsidian stone or agate in this respect, and we know that the ancient Peruvians, besides mirrors of silver, copper, and brass, possessed some which slightly astonished their Spanish conquerors. These were made of a black and opaque stone, which was susceptible of a fine polish. The earliest written records we have refer to metal mirrors; but the opinions as to time, place, and composition seem to be as numerous and various as the antiquaries and commentators themselves. The endeavours to trace their origin remind one of the arduous labours of another body of students—namely,

Those learned philologists who chase
A panting syllable through time and space;

Start it at home, and hunt it in the dark
To Gaul—to Greece—and into Noah's ark!

Some, following Cicero, conjecture that Æsculapius was the inventor of mirrors; while others point out that the old Roman alludes to a probe, an invention more in the line of the reputed father of medicine.

The Greeks were at an early period possessed of small mirrors, chiefly of bronze, and occasionally covered with a thin coating of silver. Besides its use at the toilet table in the preparation of Psyche knots and graceful drapery, it was also used in divination. The practice was to let one down into a well by means of a string to within a few inches of the water, when it was pulled up, and, after a few minutes, was expected to show the face of the sick person in whose behalf the ceremony was performed. Roman writers like Pliny and Seneca, in declaiming against increasing luxury, state that it was the ambition of every foolish woman to possess a silver mirror. Examples of these Greek and Roman articles are to be seen in collections of antiquities at towns wherever those old civilisations had spread; and from a specimen found in Cornwall, it is supposed that the Celtic population of England copied the form and substance of the Roman mirror. It was not, however, till the early part of the sixteenth century that they became common as articles of furniture and decoration. Previously, they were carried at the girdle, being merely small circular plaques of polished metal fixed in a shallow box. The outsides were often of gold, enamel, ivory, or ebony, and much ingenuity and art was expended in their decoration with relief representations of love, domestic, hunting, and other interesting scenes. As early as 625, we find Pope Boniface IV. sending Queen Ethelberga of Northumberland a present of a silver mirror. After the method of covering glass with thin sheets of metal was discovered—sometime during the middle ages, it is vaguely supposed—steel and silver mirrors were still cherished, to the neglect of the new-fangled glasses. Their manufacture on a commercial basis was first developed in Venice about the year 1507, and in England, early in the seventeenth century, the business was started by Sir Robert Mansell.

Mirrors of metal are still common in Oriental countries among people not afflicted with that malady styled progress. Bronze is the favoured substance in Japan, and the first mirror ever made in that charming country is religiously preserved at Isé as an object of the highest veneration; while that said to be presented by the Sun goddess at the foundation of the empire is an important item in the Japanese regalia.

In addition to the historical and utilitarian interest, the mirror is famous in the wide realms of mystery and superstition. According to Brand, mirrors were used by magicians 'in their superstitious and diabolical operations.'

The great and mythical Prester John possessed a mirror which showed him everything that took place in his dominions. The celebrated magic mirror which Merlin gave to King Ryence—it was called 'Venus's looking-glass'—revealed to its holder anything that a friend or foe was doing, and other interesting incidents usually associated with the detective's profession. Britomart, King Ryence's daughter, saw in it her future husband, and also his name—Sir Artagal. According to the old mythology, Vulcan made one which revealed the past, present, and future. Sir John Davies, in his poem entitled *The Orchestra*, declares, with a delicate poetical and courtier-like fancy, that Cupid once handed it to Antinous when he was in the court of Ulysses, and Antinous gave it to Penelope, who beheld therein the Court of Queen Elizabeth and all its grandeur!

Vulcan, the king of fire, that mirror wrought. . .
As there did represent in lively show
Our glorious English Court's divine image
As it should be in this our golden age!

Another famous mirror was that belonging to Kelly, the speculator or seer in the service of Dr Dee. It resembled a piece of cannel coal, and is thus celebrated in *Hudibras*:

Kelly did all his feats upon
The devil's looking-glass, a stone.

There is a tradition that the Gunpowder Plot was discovered by Dr Dee and his wonderful mirror. In a Prayer-book printed by Baskett, is a curious engraving representing the discovery through its agency. 'The plate,' says a correspondent in *Notes and Queries*, 'would seem to represent the method by which under Providence—as is evidenced by the eye—the discovery of the Gunpowder Plot was at that time seriously believed to have been effected. The tradition, moreover, must have been generally believed, or it never could have found its way into a Prayer-book printed by the king's printer.'

In the pleasant regions of folklore the mirror holds a fairly prominent place. To break one is considered an unlucky affair, a notion which is one of the most prevalent and persistent bits of modern superstition. In many parts of England, seven years of trouble is considered the penalty for such an accident; but the still more serious Scottish people regard it as a sign that a member of the family will soon die. In the south of England it is looked upon as a bad omen for a bride on her wedding morning to take a last peep at the glass before starting for church, and the struggle between superstition and vanity is no doubt very keen. The Swedish girls are afraid to look in the glass after dark, or by artificial light, lest they should forfeit the good opinion of the other sex. Most people still appear to regard it as a bad omen to see the new moon for the first time through a window pane or reflected in a mirror. In some districts the practice of covering the looking-glass, or removing it, in the presence of death still exists. The reason for this is not very obvious, though Mr Baring Gould says there is a popular notion that if a person looks into a mirror in the chamber of death, he will see the corpse looking

over his shoulder. Such superstitions seem to suggest a near approach to the primitive modes of thought of the men who found mirrors in stones and glasses in the running brook.

'BLACKFOOT:' A TRUE STORY.

'WELL, laddie,' said the old schoolmaster, carefully stopping his time-honoured briar with the tobacco he had just cut and carefully rubbed, 'it's a right interesting thing to hear your exposition of Socialism; but I'm no that sure how the universal brotherhood will turn out after a'. Did I ever tell you how I was sworn brother to a mason?'

I said nothing, but looked interested. Mr Whackbairn settled down in his chair, took several puffs, and began:

It was thirty years ago, when I was a young callant like yourself, that I was also much taken with the notion of universal brotherhood. I was just three months out of Glasgow College, and had been going up and down Scotland, and walking to and fro in it, looking for a school wherein to display my talents, when the heritors of Colston offered me the parochial school, twenty pounds a year, fees, a furnished house, and the privilege of a 'cow's gang' on the Hill of Colston. As I did not propose to take unto myself a cow, this last allurement counted for little; but nevertheless I accepted Colston.

And Colston accepted me! I am bound to say that the hearty kindness of those Lanarkshire farmers and miners was a great deal more than I deserved. I ceased to regret that inestimable privilege the 'cow's gang,' when I found that the goodwives were quite willing to keep the 'maister' in butter, eggs, and cheese.

But very lonely I should have found life in that upland village, if it had not been for the evening class of young men to whom I taught what I called land-surveying, though they declined to recognise it by any name except 'lan'-mizzerin'. With one of these young fellows I contracted a friendship on the very best Brotherhood-of-man principles. James Robertson was a mason by trade, with an aspiration after a croft, which accounted for the 'lan'-mizzerin'. He was a young giant of six-foot-three, and his bashfulness was even greater than his size. It was popularly believed that he would go two miles out of his way at any time to avoid speaking to a girl. Yet there was one girl for the privilege of speaking to whom he would cheerfully have gone twenty miles out of his way, even though all she said was to ask if he would be at the kirk the morn, which he was sure to be—but whether Katie Gray or the minister's excellent discourse on Jeremiah was the attraction, is open to question.

Katie Gray, the local beauty, lived at the croft of Burnbraes along with her father and her twin-sister Nellie, the other local beauty. Indeed, the two girls were so like that it was difficult to distinguish them, except that Nellie's eyes were brown, and Katie's a dancing hazel. But the little puss rarely gave one an oppor-

tunity of studying her eyes, so mistakes between the sisters were not infrequent. But it was reserved for me to make the monumental mistake.

Many an evening after school was closed, a tap would come to the door, and James would enter, at first with the excuse of some problem concerning 'chains' and 'acres,' afterwards ostensibly to have a 'crack,' which always sooner or later resolved itself into a monologue on the perfections of Katie Gray. Now, I could not see why James should despair; for it is not every swain who is allowed to see the lady of his affections and her sister home from 'the practising' every Friday night, and occasionally further permitted the bliss of singing with her thereafter; for James had a very good bass voice, and nourished wild aspirations after the position of precentor; and Katie sang like a lintie. I constantly heartened him up to press his suit. James was willing and even anxious so to do, but somehow the affair hung fire. At last, in an access of despairing bashfulness, he explained his laxness and the reason which made him a laggard in love.

'Eh, guid kens it's no that I dinna want the lassie! Ower an' ower have I gane doon to Burnbraes to tell her sae; but jist whan I've led up to it, an' my heart's thumpin' like my ain hammer, in comes Nellie, an' there have I to ask aboot her auntie's neuralgy or the like, an' then say I maun be steppin'. I'm no sayin' onything against Nellie; Nellie's a bonny lassie when Katie's no there' (James was nothing if not generous); 'but if she could only be kept oot o' my way for twa hoors some Friday night, I'd maybe screw up courage to ask Katie!' And the perplexed lover came to a stand-still.

Who would not have sympathised with a good fellow in such a whimsical plight? I gallantly threw myself into the breach by proposing that he should take me to Burnbraes, and introduce me to the sisters, when I would do my best to keep Nellie from disturbing the *tête-à-tête* of James and his fair one. Never was a proposal received with such sincere though semi-articulate gratitude, and we fixed on the following Friday evening at seven.

James was punctual; and we walked down the 'loan' together almost in silence. My friend was, I conjecture, considering the phrases in which he was to put his fate to the test, and win or lose it all; while I was remembering that even James admitted that Nellie was a bonny lassie when Katie wasna there. We entered under a honeysuckle arch and tapped at the door. It was opened by the neuralgic aunt.

'Hoo's a' wi' ye the nicht? An' ye've brocht the maister wi' ye. Come ben the hoose, sir, an' see the lassies!' and she bustled in before us.

Katie and Nellie were named; and after some polite conversation, dealing mostly with the crops, the cat, and the window-geranium, I asked Miss Nellie to take me outside, professing a wild desire for some of the gooseberries which were hanging in red ovals of sweetness on the bushes at the foot of the garden.

It is an absorbing business gathering goose-

berries, especially if you get a thorn into your first finger during the process. How can a man get it out with his left hand? We were obliged to sit down on the seat, while my pretty companion produced a needle, and taking my hand, began to make those frantic little dabs with which even the most charming of women attacks a thorn or splinter in the hand of masculinity. Somehow, that thorn took half-an-hour to extract, and at the end of the half-hour we felt justified in sitting another half-hour. The pair in the window seemed not to be saying much, and I thought it my duty to give James as long as possible. In fact, I would have gone on sacrificing myself nobly till ten o'clock, if it had not been that my land-surveying class began at nine, and I had reluctantly to go.

We walked up the garden walk together, and I saw my friend in the window heave himself to his feet. He emerged from the door just as Miss Nellie was pinning one of the monthly rosebuds into my button-hole—you see, I was afraid of getting another thorn in my finger, if I did it myself. We were both invited to come back soon, made our adieux, and departed.

My pupil did not say a word to me as we went down that walk. His brow wore a distinct scowl, and I judged that the case called for sympathy. Whenever we were out of eyeshot and earshot, he suddenly stopped short, and shook me—*me*, the schoolmaster of Colston—in a way that made me feel as if every tooth was loose in my head. There are moments, as Carlyle tells us, when the overwrought human being loses all respect for church-clothes. James certainly seemed to have lost all respect for the educational collar.

'What garred you do yon?' he demanded savagely.

'Whatever do you mean? Haven't I done just what you asked?' I gasped.

'When did I ask you to hold my lassie's han' for half-an-hour?' and another attack seemed imminent.

I had been sedulously keeping the wrong girl out of James's way! Was ever such a funny mistake? I am a very near-sighted man, and had confused the names of the two sisters, so that while I had been sitting with Katie on the seat, my luckless pupil had been left for an hour to the society of Nellie and the cat!

On thinking the matter over, I magnanimously forgave the shaking, feeling that under the circumstances I should have done the same. Furthermore, after the class was over for the evening, I aided and abetted James in writing Katie a formal proposal of marriage, addressed in full to Miss Katherine Gray, to prevent mistakes.

His next visit was not paid to me in the capacity of schoolmaster, but in the equally onerous position of session-clerk. He requested me to 'put in the cries,' announced that they were to be married Friday three weeks, and asked my attendance, which I agreed to give, in the capacity of best-man only.

A year after, I attended a christening in the same family; but long before that happy event James had let the story of that evening leak out, and I do believe every bashful lover in

Colston parish had been exhorted by scoffing friends to 'ask the maister to be blackfoot.' But this was my first and last appearance in this character of proxy.

THE MONTH:

SCIENCE AND ARTS.

IN No. 556 (page 540) we recorded a case of accidental charring of a fabric by contact with the bulb of an electric glow-lamp. From experiments lately made by Captain Exler it is shown that a sixteen-candle lamp sunk in paraffin reaches a maximum temperature of 94 degrees C., while a twenty-five-candle lamp will reach 101 degrees C. Gunpowder and gun-cotton are not ignited, but when spread upon wool or other material opaque to heat rays, the powder will be decomposed and the cotton darkened. Cotton-wool, cloth, and black silk will all char when bound round a glow-lamp, but will not actually take fire unless saturated with india-rubber solution. The breaking of a lamp did not ignite gun-cotton, but fired an explosive gaseous mixture.

Billiard players will be interested to hear that balls of steel have recently been made for this popular game at Stockholm. They are about the same weight as ivory balls of the same size, but cost about a quarter the price of the latter. Cast steel is employed in the manufacture, but the balls are afterwards turned in the lathe, after which they have a thickness of one-sixteenth of an inch. We are not told whether these balls possess the same amount of elasticity as those of ivory. In connection with this matter we may mention that billiard balls of a composition of which celluloid forms a chief part have been in use for some time.

M. Marey, whose name is widely known as an investigator who has made much use of photography in obtaining records of animal movements, has lately been busying himself with trying to solve the problem why a cat always falls on its feet, even though it be dropped down with its paws upwards. The photographs show precisely by what succession of motion the cat gets its feet undermost.

In response to a deputation which lately waited upon the President of the Board of Trade, that official expressed the hope that it might be in his power to introduce a Bill in Parliament for dealing with the question of immature fish. The importance of preventing the capture of fish under a useful size has again and again been urged by those who are in the best position to know what injury is done to our fisheries under the present fool-hardy system. We may hope now that something definite will be done before it is too late. With reference to the limit of size, the general feeling seems to be in favour of the example which has been set by most Continental countries. This fixes the limit for soles and plaice at eight inches, and for turbot and brill at ten inches. At present it is a common thing to see fish for sale far under these sizes.

In the meantime valuable work is being done at Dunbar under the auspices of the

Fishery Board for Scotland. Here has been established a large hatchery for the artificial propagation of the more valuable marine food-fishes. It is proposed to hatch here every season hundreds of millions of the eggs of plaice, turbot, sole, and other fishes, and to place the fry in the various fishing-grounds round the coast. Curiously enough, this work is carried on within the confines of the old castle of Dunbar. The arrangements include a tidal pond for brood-fishes, a concrete tank in which the spawn is deposited, and an incubating room capable of containing at one time eighty million fish-eggs. The pond has been formed in a space under the castle which at one time formed a dungeon, and the fish confined in it are fed daily. This experiment in marine pisciculture is attracting great attention, not only in our own country but abroad.

It is curious to note that modern workers, with all their boasted improvements of manufacture, will occasionally revert to very old methods and discover much that is good in them. A case in point is presented by certain trials of mortar batteries at Sandy Hook. Now a mortar is a stumpy little gun whose mission it was to throw a shell high in the air so that it might drop upon the enemy. Of late years it has hardly been seen except in museums; but now it has once more come to the front, and has been proved to be of considerable value. In the trials referred to it was desired to ascertain the value of mortars in repelling an enemy, and more particularly to find out whether the missiles could be thrown with sufficient accuracy to perforate the deck of a ship. The shots were made to hit a floating target repeatedly, and it was shown that when four shots were fired simultaneously, they fell so near together that they made but one splash.

The discoloration of flowers when they are preserved and dried as botanical specimens is said to be due to ammonia in the atmosphere. In order to prevent this action, it has recently been recommended to use for pressing absorbent paper which has been baked in a one per cent. solution of oxalic acid and dried. The use of such paper enables specimens to be preserved with their colours unimpaired.

A French doctor has pointed out that several fallacies are common with regard to the weight of the human body. The man who congratulates himself on his gain of several pounds in weight over a given period, may have no cause for rejoicing, for he may be under a delusion. Very few people, says this French investigator, have any correct idea of their own weight. As a rule, the correctness of his scales may be doubted, the weight of the clothing not taken into account, the time which has elapsed since eating, &c. As a matter of fact the weight of the body is continuously changing, owing to innumerable influences. On a warm day after breakfast a man will lose more than a third of a pound per hour. Seventy per cent. of the body consists of water, and thus its weight must vary with the transpiration of moisture. Therefore the inferences drawn from the loss or gain of a pound or two may be mistrusted. Fluctuations of a few ounces

per day are a sign that the body is in a healthy state.

The Medical Officer of Health attached to the large parish of Islington, in the streets of which ice-cream vendors are numerous, has been making some inquiry into the quality of the delicacy which these swarthy sons of Italy are dispensing to the youth of the metropolis. He has discovered countless microbes in this compound of flour, milk, eggs, and flavouring essences, as well as in the water for washing the glasses. One is a deadly microbe commonly found in sewage. The officer laconically attributes this state of things 'to the dirty conditions under which the creams are manufactured, to the dirt of the vessels, and the uncleanly habits of the men engaged in the industry.'

The war between China and Japan is recognised by all as a valuable object lesson to the European powers, for the combatants are fighting with modern ships and modern weapons. So far the great value of quick-firing guns on shipboard has been abundantly made manifest. So also has the awful destruction possible by one well-directed shot from a weapon of heavy calibre. One such shell was received on board the Japanese flagship at the battle of the Yalu, with the result that a heavy barbette gun was dismounted and thrown into the sea, great havoc was caused in the ship's fittings, and no fewer than fifty-one men were killed and wounded. If it had not been for this terrible shot, the Japanese loss on that occasion would have been insignificant. It is noteworthy that many of our British ships are still armed with muzzle-loading guns, and possess none of the quick-firing variety in their armament.

The teaching of medicine and philosophy in the University of modern Japan has long been mainly under the influence of German Professors. But till of late, English was not merely the principal foreign language in general use, but at all governmental schools, colleges, and the University took the first place, while German was second, and French third in standing. By a recent decree of the Japanese Minister of Education this arrangement is definitively altered: English takes now only the second place, and all students coming from the advanced schools to the University who propose to study medicine, literature, history, philosophy, or law, must have proved their mastery of German. At present there are seven German Professors in the University of Tokio.

Eight millions a year seems a fearful sum for the afflicted farmers of the United Kingdom to lose, not by bad weather or American competition, but by the industry of the warble fly or ox bot. That amount, however, is believed by the best authorities not to exceed the loss caused by this insect pest, which, rather like a small humble-bee, lays its eggs on or in the skin of cattle. The maggot grows to a chrysalis in the skin or flesh of the animal; and the damage caused by its presence to the marketable value of the hide, to the health of the animal, and to the milk-production, may be guessed when it is known that five hundred maggots have been found in one cow. Miss Ormerod, already so well known for her labours on injurious insects, has published (Simpkin,

Marshall, & Co.) a pamphlet which fully describes the warble fly and its development, with careful illustrations; and indicates how, by simple, harmless, and efficacious methods, the damage caused by it may be checked or wholly prevented.

Brick-dust mortar as a substitute for hydraulic cement, where the latter cannot be obtained, has been lately recommended, and experiment shows that the mortar will, after setting and immersion in water for several months, bear an extraordinary amount of pressure without giving way. It is also stated that an addition of ten per cent. of brick dust to ordinary mortars prevents that disintegration which is so commonly experienced. In Spain a mixture of brick dust, sand, and lime is used in preference to cement in culverts, drains, &c.; and the proportions recommended as giving the best results are one part brick dust and one part lime to two of sand. The ingredients are mixed together in a dry state, and are afterwards tempered with the necessary amount of water.

A rat is credited with having caused a strange accident which recently occurred on the electric-lighting system at Baltimore. Without any warning, a large number of the city lamps were suddenly extinguished, owing to a rat stepping from one copper terminal to another, and thus short-circuiting the current. The rat's skin is supposed to have been wet at the time, thus helping it to be a good conductor of the current. Its hair was burnt off, and the body had become quite rigid. Much damage was done to the attached switchboard and other fittings, owing to the great heat generated by the accidental contact.

The value of Anti-toxic serum as a remedy for that terrible disease diphtheria seems to be established beyond reasonable doubt. Dr Woodhead, Director of the Research laboratories of the Royal Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons, in lecturing upon this new curative agent, said that a great deal of nonsense had been written about the danger of injecting organic fluids into the human body, from a horse which might be suffering from glanders or tuberculosis. He pointed out that the presence of such ailments in a horse could be predetermined with the greatest accuracy, and therefore that the danger was non-existent. It was also pointed out by another speaker, Lord Playfair, that the system advocated by the lecturer was not attended by any suffering to the animals from which the serum was obtained. 'All the pain caused was less than that of a single lash of the whip.' See article in this *Journal*, No. 572 (Dec. 15, 1894).

Notification has been made that the seeds of hardy plants which have been gathered at Kew Gardens during the past year will be available for distribution—by way of exchange—with the colonial, Indian, and foreign botanical gardens. A list of the seeds is published in the *Kew Bulletin*, and requests should be forwarded to the Director of the Gardens as soon as possible.

In many districts, domestic water cisterns are practically done away with, the household water being drawn direct from the main. This is as it should be, for the cistern is a source of danger

of a very grave nature. In a recent Report by the Medical Officer of a large London parish, the results of examining the cisterns of forty-one 'model' dwellings is given. These water receptacles were mostly at the top of the houses, were imperfectly covered, and in dangerous proximity to drain-pipes, &c. The contents were frequently filthy, the water being covered with smuts, and in some instances decayed vegetable matter lay two inches thick on the bottom of the cistern. Private dwellings in the district were no better; and it has been resolved to put in force certain by-laws which exist for dealing with the matter. But the enforcement of such laws is a somewhat difficult matter, particularly with a class of persons to whom cleanliness is not a matter of grave consideration.

A few weeks ago the Church of St Columb, Cornwall, was struck by lightning just at the commencement of morning service. The current seems to have struck the tower, stunning the ringers in its progress through the belfry, and appearing in the body of the church as a ball of fire. The glass of the belfry window was blown to pieces, and a slight explosion occurred through injury to the gas meter. The church was not protected by a lightning-conductor.

On some of the American railways compressed air is being used by the carriage cleaners for removing dust from the interior of the vehicles. A rubber hose is carried to any part of the car, and is used just like a garden hose, only that it discharges air instead of water. A powerful stream of air is said to be far more effective than dusters or brushes, and will remove all dry dirt from cloth, and even from glass and wood. It has the further recommendation that it searches into all crevices and corners, and effectually cleanses them of the dirt which they harbour.

In the course of a recent lecture at Owens College, Manchester, Professor S. J. Hickson described several of the fishes which were found in the Museum there. In alluding to the gorgeously coloured fish of the coral reefs, he pointed out that the bright and variegated tints of the immediate surroundings on the reef rendered similar colours on the fish a protective necessity. Were the fish dull or sombre-coloured, they would be readily detected by their enemies. He also pointed out that although the 'fish out of water' had become a recognised expression for any one in an uncomfortable position, many fish lived a considerable portion of their lives in the air. Such were the flying-fish, the climbing perch of the Indian Archipelago, and others. The lecturer considered that the Manchester Museum collection was a good one, but that it required many additions. He trusted that those who made use of the new Ship Canal would bring some specimens from foreign ports which they might visit.

The inconvenience which arises on many of our railways through the names of the stations becoming indistinguishable amid the crowd of advertisements which adorn those buildings, has led to the introduction on the District (London) Railway of what is known as the Station Indicator. Upon the ceiling of each carriage there is a kind of glass case, and within it

appears the name of the next station at which the train will stop, while at the same time a bell rings. This notification does not take place until the train is within about one hundred yards of the stopping-place. The system has been thoroughly tested with successful results, and will soon be adopted throughout the District Company's system. It may be mentioned that the Great Northern Railway is also adopting special means to make the names of their stations more prominent by placing them on all lamps, station windows, &c.

A 'new method,' distinct from any mere surface schemes—trapping, poisoning, tinning, and the like—having for its object the complete extermination of the rabbit pest, is, we learn from a correspondent, being adopted in New South Wales and Victoria with much success. Inextinguishable cartridges generating copious and penetrating volumes of deadly smoke or poisonous gas are placed in the burrows, the apertures of which are then closed. Thus are suffocated and buried by one process the old and young together, a scheme said to be that of a Liverpool competitor for the prize offered for the best means of extermination.

People think of France as a wine-drinking country, and understand in a general way that in the wine-growing districts wine is consumed more largely than, say, in French Flanders. But it is not commonly known how very widely one part of France differs from another in regard to the standard beverage and the quantities consumed. At Nice, in the south, for example, the consumption of wine is at the rate of four hundred and twenty-five English imperial pints a year per head of the population! At Cherbourg, on the other hand, the quantity of wine used is only eighty-four pints per head; at Rennes, in Brittany, less than sixty pints; and at Lille, only fifty-six pints. But at Rennes, cider is taken to the amount of eight hundred and fifty-one pints per head of the population; and at Lille, beer to the amount of six hundred and sixty pints per head; while at Cherbourg they drink spirits in the formidable proportion of thirty-two pints per head annually. These figures are selected from a large list in an official Report, which proves conclusively that where the consumpt of spirits is large, the use of what in France are reckoned 'hygienic drinks'—namely, wine, cider, and beer—is proportionately decreased, or nearly so. And in this regard it is at present proposed to regulate and modify this tendency in the liquor trade by legislation and administrative measures—one plan proposed being to abolish or largely reduce the taxation on the hygienic drinks, while greatly raising the duties on all kinds of spirits, treated most justly as vastly more dangerous to the public health and well-being than the milder beverages. Paris is mainly a wine-drinking town, but, like Marseilles and Lyons, does not consume so much as many of the smaller towns; though when examined in detail, the provision seems to be on a sufficiently generous scale. In Paris the annual rate per head is three hundred and forty pints of wine, sixteen of cider, twenty-one of beer, and rather over twelve pints per head of spirits. In whisky-drinking Scotland the annual rate per head of whisky

consumption was, in 1892-93, just a little over twelve and a half pints—little more than the proportion of spirits demanded by the Parisians, without regard to the large quantity of wine also required there for their annual wants. In view of this, it is strange that travellers still report that drunkenness—as we unfortunately know it in Great Britain—is a thing of very rare occurrence. The Parisians are represented as temperate drinkers though they drink just about as many glasses of spirits as the Scotch (the largest consumers of spirits in Britain), besides nearly thirty times as many glasses of wine as they do of spirits, not to speak of a fair allowance of cider and beer! And at Cherbourg the inhabitants take two and three-quarter times as much spirits as the Scotch, not to speak of cider, beer, and wine. As it is to be hoped and presumed that women and children have little or nothing to do with the figures for the consumpt of spirits, and as very many men take none at all, some folks must take pretty large doses. If French toppers can without visible and unpleasant consequences carry such quantities of liquor, this must be one of the 'things they do better in France.'

EVERLASTING SUMMER.

It needs not woods with violets paved,
Nor roses in the lane,
Nor lilies by cool waters laved,
Nor gorses on the plain,
Nor song of birds in bush and brake,
Nor rippling wavelets' chime,
Nor blue and cloudless skies, to make
For me the summer-time.

My lady's cheeks twin roses are,
That bloom the whole year round;
My lady's throat is whiter far
Than whitest lily found;
When thick and fast fall hail and sleet,
The blue of summer skies
I find where'er my glances meet
My lady's azure eyes.

When blackbirds' notes shake not the dew
From lilac blooms away—
When larks sing not in heaven's blue
At dawning of the day—
When orioles no more rejoice
High in the chestnut tree—
My lady's sweet and joyous voice
Brings summer back for me.

* * TO CONTRIBUTORS.

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